UNITED NATIONS **ST**

Secretariat

ST/AI/407
1 August 1995

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: SMOKING AT UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK*

1. In the past several decades, researchers and health authorities all over the world have clearly established the fact that tobacco smoke is a dangerous environmental pollutant. Its inhalation by those who do not smoke may be detrimental to their health - the phenomenon which has come to be known as "passive" or "second-hand" smoking. Certain parts of tobacco smoke can be recirculated through the ventilation system in a closed environment and be responsible for environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) pollution. Exposure to ETS at the workplace is the leading cause of ill health due to passive smoking. The World Health Organization (WHO) has expressed its concerns about the involuntary exposure of people to tobacco smoke in the workplace and has issued a statement in order to protect the fundamental rights of non-smokers to breathe healthy air, free from pollutants, at their work. At the forty-sixth World Health Assembly, WHO called upon the international organizations of the United Nations system to prohibit tobacco smoking on their premises (resolution WHA 46.8).

2. The policy announced in information circular ST/IC/87/54 in 1987 to regulate smoking at United Nations Headquarters has not fulfilled its expectations in terms of enabling the Organization to provide a healthy work environment free from ETS. Many staff members have expressed their dissatisfaction with the application of this policy and have called for a stricter policy, including a total ban on smoking at Headquarters.

3. The United Nations as an employer fully recognizes its responsibilities for employee health and welfare and does have a moral obligation to provide a healthy work environment for its staff. With this in mind, effective

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* Personnel Manual index No. 13210.

24 October 1995, smoking will be permitted only in the following areas, under the conditions described:

(a) Delegates' Dining Room. Thirty per cent of the Delegates' Dining Room will remain as a smoking area. The smoking and non-smoking areas will be clearly marked;

(b) North Lounge. Smoking will be permitted only in the easternmost third of the Lounge, including the Coffee Shop;

(c) Larger conference rooms. Although permitted, smoking will be discouraged in the larger conference rooms. The complete ban on smoking in the smaller and medium-size conference rooms, in existence since 1985, will continue. It will be the responsibility of the chairpersons of meetings in these rooms to request compliance with these policies;

(d) Staff Lounge/Secretariat Building. Smoking will be permitted in the Staff Lounge, except the area adjacent to the main cafeteria in the Secretariat Building;

(e) Staff Lounge/DC1 Building. Smoking will continue to be permitted in the limited areas so marked.

4. All smoking and smoke-free public areas will bear appropriate signs. All necessary measures will be taken to ensure fire safety in areas where smoking is permitted.

5. All smokers among the staff and delegates who wish to stop smoking and need support in doing so are encouraged to contact the Medical and Employee Assistance Division, Office of Human Resources Management (extension 3-7080). Advice will be provided in identifying and arranging for the appropriate assistance.

6. The present administrative instruction supersedes circular ST/IC/87/54 of 26 October 1987.